

PRESS RELEASE

President of Nigeria unites behind the call for a People's Vaccine for COVID-19

GENEVA, 16 October 2020—The President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, has announced that Nigeria will be joining the urgent global call for a [People's Vaccine for COVID-19](#). The President endorsed the initiative and released an official public statement in favour of the campaign.

“Learning from the painful lessons from a history of unequal access in dealing with diseases such as HIV we must heed the warning that “those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it”,” said Mr Buhari. “Only a People's Vaccine with equality and solidarity at its core can protect all of humanity and get our societies safely running again. A bold international agreement cannot wait.”

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, home to more than 200 million people, and has the third highest number of COVID-19 cases in Africa after South Africa and Ethiopia. In March 2020, Mr Buhari set up a multisectoral Presidential Task Force to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which produced a [mid-term report in July 2020](#) outlining a significant body of work undertaken to stop the spread of COVID-19.

However, the report also shows that the health infrastructure and equipment levels in Nigeria are not strong enough to support a sustained national response to COVID-19 and that if the pandemic were to spread exponentially Nigeria would struggle to mount an effective response. This demonstrates the urgent need for access to a vaccine for COVID-19 in Nigeria as soon as it becomes available.

“UNAIDS and other members of the People's Vaccine Alliance are calling for a new approach that puts public health first by sharing knowledge and maximizing supply to make sure that no one is left behind,” said Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “Anything short of that will lead to more deaths and economic chaos, forcing millions into destitution.”

The People's Vaccine Alliance is a coalition of organizations and activists united under a common aim of campaigning for a People's Vaccine for COVID-19. In support of actions taken by the World Health Organization (WHO), including the [COVID-19 Technology Access Pool](#), the People's Vaccine Alliance demands that all vaccines, treatments and tests be monopoly-free, mass produced, distributed fairly and made available to all people, in all countries, free of charge.

“The People's Vaccine will go far in levelling the power dynamics that perpetuate inequality and fuel injustice and it will ensure that no one is left behind,” said Edward Kallon, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria. “Nobody should be denied a COVID-19 vaccine because of where they live or how much money they have—it has to be a global public good, available to all who need it, regardless of their situation.”

The People's Vaccine Alliance is calling on pharmaceutical corporations and governments to:

- **Prevent monopoly on vaccine production** by making public funding for research and development conditional on research institutions and pharmaceutical companies sharing all information, data, biological material, know-how and intellectual property. The WHO COVID-19 Technology Access Pool provides the mechanism for such sharing.
- **Prevent monopoly on vaccine supply** by enabling as many manufacturers as possible, including in developing countries, to produce the vaccines.
- **Implement fair allocation** of the vaccine that prioritizes health workers and other at-risk groups in all countries. Vaccination programmes should include marginalized groups, including refugees, prisoners and people living in slums and other crowded housing conditions. Allocation between and within countries should be based on need and not ability to pay.
- Provide the vaccine **free of charge** at the point of use.
- Ensure the **full participation** of the governments of developing countries as well as global civil society in decision-making forums about the vaccines (and other COVID-19 technologies) and ensure transparency and accountability of all decisions.

To date, the People's Vaccine has been endorsed by more than 140 leaders and advocates globally, including the President of South Africa and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Presidents of Ghana and Senegal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

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UNAIDS

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The People's Vaccine Alliance

The [People's Vaccine Alliance](#) is a coalition of organisations and activists united under a common aim of campaigning for a People's Vaccine' for COVID-19 that is based on shared knowledge and is freely available for all. A global common good. It is coordinated by Oxfam and UNAIDS and its other members include: Free the Vaccine, Frontline AIDS, Global Justice Now, International Treatment Preparedness Coalition, Just Treatment, Nizami Ganjavi International Center, Open Society Foundations, STOPAIDS, SumOfUs, Wemos and Yunus Centre.